

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Silas C. Sterling R10120

f41SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

7/6/11 rev'd 9/18/14

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

[p 12]

State of Alabama Blount County:

On this 4th day of October 1843 personally appeared in open Court before the Orphans Court of the County and State aforesaid now sitting, Silas C Sterling a resident of the County and State aforesaid aged 81 years on the 19th of next December who first being duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. I entered the Army of the United States as a volunteer in a company of Rangers commanded by my Brother John Sterling on the 14th or fifteenth day of May 1780 ordered out by Colonel Neil [Neel] we were engaged in ranging along and guarding the frontiers between the Cherokee Indians and the settlements of the whites on the frontiers in South Carolina. I continued in this campaign of Service until the following September about the last week of the above named month making 4 months in this trip. I was into small engagements the first took place at a place called Williams Mills with the Tories we defeated them took four prisoners two of whom we hung by the name of Glover, notorious horse thieves. This occurred in the month of August the precise day of the month I do not recollect – another engagement took place with another company of Tories commanded by one Fanning this occurred at my Father's house in York District South Carolina. The Tories had stopped there to plunder – we together with Colonel Neals Company came upon them before they were aware of it however they fought until we killed two of their company after which they surrendered and they were all taken prisoners. This skirmish took place about the last of September when my tour of service expired I returned home – and the first week of October we were ordered out by Colonel Neil commanded by the same Captain (viz.) Captain John Sterling we were ordered to go in pursuit of one Bill Cunningham [William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham] a Captain of a Tory Company who were plundering in the neighborhood of Ninety Six we continued our pursuit through the country in different sections but without being able to get up with him until the first of January 1781, when my Brother John Sterling was appointed forage master in Sumpter's [Thomas Sumter's] Army, when our company was broke up I then went into Sumpter's Army and remained in the same at a place called Buck head thence to Orangeburg we remained in the Army engaged in all the services of the Camp and performing military duty until the first week of March. This term of service was five months in the first of October 1780 to the first of March 1781. I then left the Army – went into Orangeburg District is not mistaken in the name on the Edisto River and made a crop. I again joined the Army in September following about the last days of the month, in a company of spies commanded by Captain Gideon Jennings and attached to the Regiment com'd

by Colonel Rump [Rumph] – we then marched own in the direction of Charleston – at Dorchester we came upon a little party of British Dragoons they fled leaving their swords & caps all behing [behind] so I availed myself of the times and furnished myself with a cap of the British Dragoons – several of the boys did likewise. From this point we returned immediately back towards Orangeburg on our return we met a company of Tories at one Spargues' in an old field called the Walnut field – we had a few rounds at them they broke in confusion & ran off in every direction so we got none of them perhaps some left badly wounded. We continued our March to Orangeburg nothing material occurring in the balance of the route in this trip we were out just 4 weeks & 2 days – which was the first days of November – in 2 or 3 days after our return I joined a company commanded by Captain Peters, and Major Mee [George Mee] was the commanding officer of the Division to which the company belonged – I was appointed Orderly Sergeant so soon as I entered the Company. I served in this capacity 2 months exactly in Captain Peters Company. His time expired the company then commanded by Captain Hannah who succeeded – I continued Orderly Sergeant for 2 months more. I then had been Orderly Sergeant from the 3rd of November 1781 to the 3rd day of March 1782 making in all 4 months Orderly Sergeant in the above named company. I was here discharged from service and left the Army for home. I served in the capacity of a private ten months as Orderly Sergeant 4 months making in all fourteen months service in the Revolutionary war – of the Regular Officers I can recollect the name of General Sumter or Colonel, Major Mee – John Hood Lieutenant – my memory does not serve me to recollect the names as it should – I have no documentary evidence to which I can refer by which to refresh my memory.

I received no discharge from service but was relieved from the service by other troops taking place. I hereby relinquish any claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declare that my name is not on the Pension Roll of the agency of any State. I know of no person whose testimony I can procure who can testify to my service.

Witness my hand & seal

S Silas C. Sterling {Seal}



[John H Henderson and Caleb Murphree gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[p 3]

State of Alabama Blount County: SS

On this eighth day of July A.D. 1852 personally appeared in open Court before the Court of Probate now sitting Silas Sterling a resident of the County of Blount in the State of Alabama – aged eighty-nine years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers & served as herein stated – viz.

He was a private in a small company of Rangers commanded by Captain John Sterling who had been ordered to raise the said Company by Colonel Neil commandant of the Militia of York District South Carolina. That he voluntarily joined the said Company of Rangers at York District South Carolina on the 13th or 14th day of May in the year 1780. It being as he remembers the same year in which the battle of Camden was fought. The Company was composed of about 25 men and was marched to the Western frontiers to check the incursions of the Cherokee Indians & the depredations of the Tories. That the Company ranged along the waters of the Keewee, Little River & Cain Creek etc.

The Cherokees and others seeming to be peaceable [peaceable] in that region the Company returned towards home and when they reached the Saluda River they attacked a party of Tories at a place called Williams' Mills the Tories made but little resistance – five of them were taken prisoners and put under guard – and while the company was pursuing the fugitives over the Saluda – the guard hung two of the prisoners by the name of Glover who were known to be notorious horse thieves. This was in August. From the Saluda the company returned to York district and was disbanded but the men received no written discharge. The company was disbanded about the first of September 1780 – he having served in the said company from the 13 or 14th of May until the time a period of not less than four months & fifteen days.

A few days after the disbanding of the aforesaid Company Captain John Sterling was again ordered by Colonel Neil to raise a company & go in pursuit of some Tories under the command of Elisha Hall or Bill Cunningham [William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham] who were plundering near Fort Ninety Six. He further states that he again volunteered joined the said Captain's Company in York district South Carolina for an indefinite time and in the first week of October A.D. 1780 they started for Fort Ninety Six. But finding that the Tories had been dispersed err they reached their point of destination they turned northward to join Sumter's [Thomas Sumter's] Army & cross Broad River the day previous to the battle of Cowpens [January 17, 1781]. Hearing that Sumter had marched for Orangeburg they crossed the Congaree and joined Sumter's Army at Orangeburg about the first of February 1781 or soon afterwards and remained there till the first of March following. The said Captain John Sterling was appointed forage master on Sumter's Army and the company was in consequence thereof broken up. This Tour of service was not less than four months & 15 days.

He then went down on the Edisto River in Orangeburg district & made a crop. The British Army during this time had so overrun the country that open military resistance in that quarter was deemed wholly impracticable. But towards the close of the summer Sumter having returned from the northern part of the State again inspired the patriots with fresh hopes – and active military operations were again resumed. The last of September 1781 in Orangeburg district South Carolina he joined a spy company commanded by Captain Gideon Jennings & attached to the Regiment commanded by Colonel Rump (or Rhump) [Rumph]. That they were marched off in the direction of Charleston when they arrived at the Dogisters [Dorchester] 20 miles above Charleston they came upon a small party of British dragoons who were on a spree – they fled precipitously on their approach leaving part of their clothing & arms behind them. From this point the Company returned back but did not keep the main road for fear of intercepting Tarleton's dragoons who were expected to be somewhere between Charleston & Orangeburg but the Company was marching along a middle way leading between the main road & the Edisto River. He distinctly recollects that on the return from the Dogisters he heard the firing at the battle of Eutaw Springs. Shortly afterwards they fell in with a small company of Tories at one Spragues in an old field called the Walnut field. After firing a few rounds the Tories broke and fled. In this Tour he was out just thirty-one days. The company being broken up as soon as it reached Orangeburg – he in common with the rest of the Company received no discharge.

He further states that at Orangeburg on the 3rd day of November 1781 he joined a company of drafted militia commanded by Captain – Hannah in the Division commanded by Major Mee. He was immediately appointed orderly Sergeant – the draft being for 2 months at the end of that time some other troops came in and Captain Peters took the command of the company. He served as orderly Sergeant in said company 4 months – 2 under Hannah & 2 under

Peters. This term of service lasted till the 3rd of March 1782 – during all which time he was stationed at Orangeburg – and was almost constantly employed in scouting parties – at the end of the above named time other troops having arrived & having previously heard of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis & presuming the war was about at an end he left the Army and returned home.

He received no certificate of discharge from any of his tours of service – and owing to the great length of time since these events happened he knows of no living witness by whom the above facts can be proved – That he has no documentary evidence with which to refresh his memory and it is long since he ever read the history of these times. He however recollects the names of General Sumter under whom he served part of the time – and Major Mee and Captain Hutchison of the State Troops who were stationed at Orangeburg at the same time that he was stationed there.

He also recollects the names of Hannah Boggs and two by name of Moore & 2 McWhorters who were soldiers who served with him and some of the same campaigns & who have drawn pensions for said services but whom he is informed are now dead. He further states that owing to his great age & the consequent loss of memory he is unable to give the precise dates & occurrences as satisfactorily to himself as he once could but that from the best of his recollection he served in the Army of the revolution not less than the periods before mentioned to wit – first under Captain John Sterling as a private 4 months & 15 days; 2nd under the same as a private 4 months & 15 days; 3rd under Captain Jennings as a private one month; forth under Rumph as orderly Sergeant 2 months 5th under Peters as orderly Sergeant 2 months making in all 10 months as private and 4 months orderly Sergeant & for such services he claims a pension. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of the agency of any state.

Sworn to & subscribed the day and year aforesaid

S/ John C Gillespie, Judge of Probate

S/ Silas Sterling

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Silas Sterling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

[The Rev. John P Thomas, a Minister, gave the standard supporting affidavit. James Hendricks gave a separate standard supporting affidavit.]

I John C Gillespie Judge of the Probate Court of Blount County having called before me Silas Sterling who subscribed & swore to the foregoing declaration – personally propounded to him the following interrogatories to which he answers as follows

Interrogatory 1st Where and in what year were you born?

Answer. I was born in the State of North Carolina in the year 1762 on the 19th day of December 2nd Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer. I have no record of my age at this time but there was a record of which was destroyed by the plundering of my father's house by the British and Tories

3rd Where were you living when called into service: where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer. I was living in York District South Carolina when first called into service and after the expiration of my first and 2nd terms of service I entered the troops in Orangeburg District South Carolina and after the close of the war settled in York district South Carolina and continued there up to the year 1814. I then removed to Franklin County in the State of Tennessee up to the year

A.D. 1817 and thence removed to Blount County in the State of Alabama where I now live

4th How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if in substitute, for whom?

Answer. I voluntarily entered the service each and every time though the troops with whom I served with at Orangeburg were drafted man

5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer. I served with General Sumter, Major Mee and Captain Hutchison of the State Troops besides the Militia officers who I have stated in my declaration I recollect the names of Colonel Winn who commanded a militia Regiment. I was a mounted man and during the tours I served I furnished my own horse and equipage

6th Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given and what has become of it?

Answer. I received no written discharges

7th State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief in your services as a soldier in the revolution.

Answer. James Hendricks, John P Thomas, Caleb Murfree, James Carnes, Benjah Sapp, James Copeland, John Yielding, and many others and I believe all who know me all of the foregoing questions and answers were taken down by me in writing in open court.

[p 36: letter dated September 1852 from the deputy South Carolina Comptroller General stating that he personally has reviewed the records in his office and can find no record indicating that Silas Sterling rendered service during the revolution.]

[p 41: A letter dated February 20, 1844 from the veteran to the Hon. Reuben Chapman asking him to push the veteran's petition through. The letter appears to be in the handwriting of the veteran.]